

Appl. No. 09/297,774
Docket No. JA-179
Amdt. dated October 17, 2011
Reply to Office Action mailed on June 16, 2011
Customer No. 27752

REMARKS

Claim Status

Claims 14, 16-20 and 23-28 are pending in the present application. No additional claims fee is believed to be due.

New dependent claims 24-28 have been added. Claims 24-28 dependent directly or indirectly from independent claim 23.

It is believed these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 14, 16-20 and 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Austin '206 in view of Krautkramer '413 and Willey et al. '736. Applicants traverse the rejection in view of the following remarks.

Applicants respectfully reminds the Office that the present application claims priority to International Application Number PCT/US96/18339, which was filed on November 8, 1996. Applicants submit that the Krautkramer '413 reference as a priority date of September 1, 1999. It is therefore Applicants position that since the Krautkramer '413 reference does not qualify as prior art, the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness of claims 14, 16-20 and 23 and newly added dependent claims 24-28.

Reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of all the claims are therefore respectfully requested.

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Conclusion

This response represents an earnest effort to place the present application in proper form and to distinguish the invention as claimed from the applied reference(s). In view of the foregoing, entry of the amendment(s) presented herein, reconsideration of this application, and allowance of the pending claim(s) are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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